

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ARA-16 NIC-01 SY-04 SCCT-02 OPR-02

DRC-01 /127 W

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R 301122Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9710

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2163

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, VT, CU, PO

SUBJ: LUNT-PERALTA EXCHANGE

REF: LISBON 2108

SUMMARY: IN PRESS CONFERENCE, PERALTA LAWYER INDICATED HE MIGHT SOON BE LEAVING CASE. RESPECTABLE POLITICAL GROUPS HAVE REFRAINED FROM CRITICIZING JUNTA FOR HANDLING OF PERALTA PROTEST DEMONSTRATION. JUNTA MEMBER ASSERTS LUNT-PERALTA EXCHANGE REMAINS JUNTA'S FIRST PRIORITY BUT INDICATES JUNTA MAY BE CONSIDERING EXCHANGE PERALTA FOR CUBAN INFLUENCE ON PAIGC IN NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY

1. LISBON PRESS MAY 29 CONTAINS REPORTS ON PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 28 GIVEN BY PERALTA ATTORNEY (AND BROTHER OF GOP RPIME (MINISTER) DR. MANUEL PALMA CARLOS, MAJOR POINT OF WHICH WAS INDICATION THAT PALMA CARLOS MIGHT SOON ABANDON THE CASE. ON PAPER SEEMS TO LINK ABANDONMENT WITH FACT THAT PERALTA DISAGREED WITH PALMA CARLOS' PURSUAL OF HABEAS CORPUS ACTION.
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ANOTHER ACCOUNT INDICATES THAT PERALTA DID NOT WISH

TO PROCEED WITH JUDICIAL PROCESS BECAUSE HE DID NOT WISH TO CONTRIBUTE TO ALLEGED PRESS CAMPAIGN IN U.S. WHICH TREATED CASE AS REPRESENTING MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN JUNTA DN PORTUGUESE JUDICIARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION MAY 29 WITH DCM, JUNTA MEMBER GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO DESCRIBED PALMA CARLOS' PRESS INTERVIEW AS REPRESENTING ATTEMPT BY HIM TO BOW OUT OF CASE WITHOUT LOSING FACE. GALVAO DE MELO UNABLE PROVIDE ACCOUNT OF MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT SPINOLA AND CUBA CHARGE ASTRAY MAY 27 SINCE HE HAD NOT DISCUSSED CASE WITH SPINOLA FOLLOWING INTERVIEW. HE GAVE IMPRESSION THAT SPINOLA HAD INTENDED TO TAKE FAIRLY STRONG LINE WITH CUBAN, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF STREET DEMONSTRATION OUTSIDE LISBON MILITARY HOSPITAL IN FAVOR PERALTA'S RELEASE. COMMENT: CONCEIVABLY TOUGHNESS OF SPINOLA LINE MAY HAVE INDUCED PALMA CARLOS TO DROP CASE. ALSO CONCEIVABLE THAT SPINOLA PRESSURED PRIME MINISTER TO CALL OFF HIS BROTHER. END COMMENT

3. GALVAO DE MELO STATED THAT CUBAN POSITION NOT TO EXCHANGE LUNT FOR PERALTA STILL FIRM. HE INSISTED THAT EXCHANGE OF PERALTA FOR LUNT STILL REMAINED "OUR FIRST PRIORITY". HE NOTED THAT ONE OF FUNDAMENTAL POINTS OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT'S PROGRAM WAS RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND CUBA HAD MADE AN INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT, ALBEIT NOT WITH PORTUGAL, TO EXCHANGE LUNT FOR PERALTA. HOWEVER, HE INDICATED THAT EVENTS COULD CONCEIVABLY DICTATE ANOTHER OUTCOME. PORTUGUESE WERE CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY OF SEEKING OBTAIN CUBAN SUPPORT IN THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WITH PAIGC AS PART OF DEAL INVOLVING RELEASE OF PERALTA. IN ANY CASE, HE GAVE ASSURANCE THAT NO ACTION WAS CONTEMPLATED FOR THE TIME BEING AND THAT MATTER NOW AWAITING CUBAN REACTION TO SPINOLA-ASTRY ENCOUNTER. ASKED ABOUT STATEMENT TO DEMONSTRATORS MAY 26 BY LISBON POLICE CHIEF THAT PERALTA WOULD NOT BE EXCHANGED FOR CIA AGENT, GALVAO DE MELO REPLIED
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"WHAT ELSE COULD HE SAY?"

4. MEANWHILE, EXPECTED CRITICISM FROM POLITICAL GROUPS MORE RESPECTABLE THAN MRPP FOR JUNTA'S HANDLING OF PROTEST DEMONSTRATION (REFTEL) HAVE NOT RPT NOT BEEN FORTHCOMING. MDP (CENTER-LEFT MIXTURE) COMMENTED ON CASE INDICATING IT FAVORED PERALTA'S RELEASE BUT COMMENT CAME IN DOCUMENT

CALLING FOR RESTRAINT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES
AND CONDEMNING MRPP FOR TAKING TO THE ATREETS OVER
PERALTA CASE.

5. COMMENT: WHILE PORTUGUESE RESOLVE TO KEEP
PERALTA UNDER DETENTION FOR THE TIME BEING SEEMS
FIRM, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT FIRMNESS THEIR RESOLVE
TO RELEASE HIM ONLY IN EXCHANGE FOR LUNT MAY HAVE
WEAKENED AND MAY NOT HOLD UP IF THEY ARE GIVEN
REASON TO BELIEVE THAT CUBAN INTERVENTION ON
THEIR BEHALF WITH PAIGC COULD BE DECISIVE FACTOR
IN CURRENT OR SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATIONS. SCOTT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: JUNTA, PRISONER EXCHANGE, POLITICAL PRISONERS, CIVIL DISORDERS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LISBON02163
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740136-0267
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974058/aaaaagim.tel
Line Count: 127
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LISBON 2108
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 APR 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <13 JUN 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LUNT-PERALTA EXCHANGE
TAGS: CASC, VT, CU, PO, (PERALTA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005